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# U.S. policy blind and confused

## BLIND

By Clare Boothe Luce

"The beginning of all war," Milton wrote three centuries ago, "may be discerned not only by the first act of hostility, but by counsels and preparations foregoing."

The peculiar American doctrine of war rejects the military initiative. In the name of morality, the American people are agreed to accept and absorb the first *military* act of hostility. As he who strikes first is twice armed, this privilege of the first strike which we accord the enemy is an enormous advantage. This makes it crucial for us to discern his secret war counsels and preparations, or as we would call them today, his intentions and capabilities. Our failure to do so resulted in the single greatest military disaster in our history — the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 1940 the United States placed an embargo on oil and aviation fuel to Japan. This hostile *economic* act, little noticed by Americans at the time, set in motion in Japan those secret counsels and preparations which precipitated America into World War II.

"The two cardinal virtues of war," wrote Thomas Hobbes, "are force and fraud." Tokyo, having determined be-

cause of the embargo to war on the United States, took care to conceal its hostile intent by carefully creating a fraudulent climate of diplomatic willingness to negotiate. When Admiral Yamamoto sat to sea to launch his long-planned strike on our fleet, a Japanese diplomatic mission was in Washington, ostensibly seeking what today we would call a detente agreement. According to those "reliable White House and Department of State sources" on which our reliable press so heavily relies for its intelligence, the negotiations had been making progress.

When the Japanese bombs began to rain down on our sitting-duck ships and planes in Honolulu, our chief of staff, General George Marshall, was enjoying a leisurely morning canter in Rock Creek Park. I believe this marked the last time any chief of staff has ever been seen there on horseback.

When the *Dies Irae* was over, President Roosevelt proclaimed December 7 a day that would "live in infamy."

December 7 has lived less in infamy than as the day when Murphy's Law worked with a vengeance. Everything that could go wrong went tragically wrong at Pearl, at Hickham, at Clark Air Field in the Philippines, and in Washington. But what fundamentally went wrong was the failure of U.S. intelligence.

The official assessment of the blame for Pearl was delayed until the congressional investigations of 1946. These showed that there had been no U.S. intelligence out of Tokyo on its war intentions or on Yamamoto's secret plans to attack Pearl. Such intelligence would have enabled the United States to take steps that would have prevented the attack. Fragments of hard intelligence on the *imminence* of the attack had, however, been collected, and the attack itself might have failed of success if they had been got together, evaluated and disseminated to our top decision makers in time for them to get their heads together. From beginning to end, the intelligence process — collection, analysis, evaluation, dissemination — had sorely failed.

The congressional investigations, in effect, exonerated President Roosevelt and his top foreign policy makers of any blame for the disaster at Pearl. (In passing, the judgments of history have not been quite so lenient. Historians are the "intelligence agents" of literature; they collect, analyze, evaluate, verify, and produce the information and estimates about the past which we call history).

But as Congress saw things in 1947, thru no fault of his own, President Roosevelt, our commander-in-chief, did not have *right there on his desk* the intelligence he needed either to meet or to prevent the attack on Pearl. Congress decided that no American president must ever again be left in such dangerous ignorance of enemy intentions. There must never again be another Pearl Harbor.

This decision resulted in the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, which regulated all our foreign intelligence gathering services and also created the Central Intelligence Agency.

1947 was the first year of the Cold War. Another fact interesting to recall today is that one of the Soviet acts which initiated the Cold War was Stalin's refusal at the end of World War II to withdraw Soviet troops from Iran. Congress had no trouble at that time in perceiving that the Soviet Union was the only power capable of attacking the war-devastated countries of Europe, and the Middle East, or that its Marxist-Leninist ideology committed it to a policy of World Revolution and to the overthrow, by force or subversion, of the political systems of all non-Communist countries. In 1947, the Communist threat seemed worldwide, and in Congress' view, it required a worldwide intelli-